



CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: April 1 through June 30, 2005

**BULGARIA: VOTER EDUCATION AND GET-OUT-THE-VOTE IN ADVANCE OF
THE 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

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I. SUMMARY

On June 25, Bulgarian voters cast their ballots to elect members of the 40th National Assembly. While overall turnout was lower than expected at 55 percent, initial exit polling suggest that the youth turnout was higher than the national average. Despite fears that the new integrated ballot would cause confusion among voters, significant voter education efforts prior to the election allowed for serious problems to be avoided. Only 1.5 percent of ballots were filled out incorrectly, on par with statistics in long-established democracies' elections.

In April, the National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) began a non-partisan, voter education and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) program targeted at young, urban voters—a demographic traditionally perceived as unlikely to vote. The program combined a national media campaign with a small grants program that enabled NGOs to conduct grassroots GOTV activities throughout Bulgaria. The specific objective of the program is to provide technical and financial assistance to NGOs to target youth and encourage their participation in the electoral process.

To that end, NDI and its NGO partners conducted the following program activities this quarter:

- Produced GOTV television and radio spots that were aired more than 500 times in May and June;
- Developed and distributed 250,000 voter education brochures in all 264 municipalities in Bulgaria;
- Organized 14 candidate debates that provided young people with an opportunity to directly question candidates on issues that were important to them; and
- Conducted door-to-door outreach that reached more than 5,000 people.

Specific results observed this quarter include the following:

- Youth turnout for the parliamentary elections was equal to or higher than other age groups under 50 and was higher than the national turnout. Exit polls conducted by Sova Harris showed that 17.8 percent of voters were aged 18 to 29, which was the same percentage as voters in their 40s and slightly higher than the percentage of voters in their 30s.
- NGOs conducted more than 40 voter education activities that directly reached more than 50,000 voters. Another 6,000 people were reached through the internet.
- Following advice given by NDI and its NGO partners, the Central Election Commission used the Arial font on election ballots, as it is the easiest for the visually impaired to read.

II. BACKGROUND

For only the second time since 1989, a governing coalition served its full four-year mandate. Voters went to the polls on June 25 to elect a new government and members of the 40th National Assembly. Public discontent with the political elite still plagues the young democracy; however, the governing coalition was able to maintain a sustainable level of support due to the development of a multi-party system, the growing role of civil society in public affairs, and the popular support for Bulgaria's full membership in NATO and its anticipated accession to the European Union in 2007.

Citizens express frustration over the lack of attention politicians pay to the issues voters feel are important, such as healthcare reform and economic stagnation. In particular, young people (18-25) feel frustrated by the lack of open debate on education reform and of progress on the fight against corruption within the university system. The June parliamentary elections presented an opportunity for young people to organize themselves to prove that they are a political force and to draw attention to the issues that youth consider important—high unemployment, the inconvertibility of university course credit systems with European standards, and a poor health care system. Changes to the election law, which allowed students to vote where they study, rather than traveling to their permanent address, provided youth with an opportunity to increase their turnout and, as a result, attract the attention of political parties.

In an effort to reach out to voters, the Bulgarian government organized a controversial GOTV campaign that included a lottery for voters. Opposition parties were skeptical of the government's efforts, as they felt the money used on prizes could be put to better use. While the campaign was not publicly targeted at young voters, the lottery prizes included electronics and other high technology items to entice young, urban voters. Some parties, such as New Time and the Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria (DSB), sent young candidates to public events to attract young voters. Three parties—Coalition for Bulgaria (KB), Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF)—had leaders on their lists who were under 30 years of age. Although this is a positive step for promoting youth inclusion in the political process, few parties had young people in electable positions.

Although voter turnout for the elections was 55.7 percent, down 11 percent from the 2001 parliamentary elections, youth turnout was higher than the national average¹. According to the Institute for Marketing and Social Surveys' (MBMD) exit polls, 57 percent of eligible 18 to 29 year olds voted in these elections. Sova Harris' exit polls also showed that 17.8 percent of the actual voters were 18 to 29, which was the same percentage as voters in their 40s and slightly higher than the percentage of voters in their 30s. By demonstrating that they vote in similar numbers to other age demographics, young people have shown that they can no longer be dismissed by politicians as passive.

Recognizing that NGOs have a unique role to play in this process of increasing the participation of youth in the political process, NDI coordinated a national network of NGOs to conduct voter education and motivational activities aimed at youth (18-25) throughout the country. NDI's program built on previous GOTV efforts by working with national NGO networks to organize their local NGO partners and build relations with government bodies and relevant nongovernmental associations at the national and local levels. The specific objective of the program was to provide technical and financial assistance to NGOs to target youth and encourage their participation in the electoral process.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

This quarter, NDI worked with a coalition of seven NGO networks to conduct a national, nonpartisan, voter education and get-out-the vote program, *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!*



(I am young and vote!), targeting young, urban voters. The campaign reached voters through radio and television ads featuring Bulgarian personalities, and NGO outreach activities that were conducted in approximately 20 municipalities.

Executive Council

To provide overall guidance to the design and implementation of the *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* campaign, NDI formed an executive council comprised of representatives from seven NGOs and the Institute. Six NGOs were previous partners of NDI, while the seventh (the U.N. Youth Club), was recommended as a responsible youth organization. In addition to shaping program design, the executive council produced the national media campaign, designed voter education material, and made recommendations to the Central Election Commission (CEC). The executive council included the following organizations:

- United Nations Association of Bulgaria
- National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB)
- National Network for Equal Opportunities
- National Human Rights Association for People with Disabilities "Equality"
- An informal network of Roma NGOs

¹ For a complete discussion of election results, please see Appendix A, NDI's Election Update.

- U.N. Youth Clubs
- Bulgarian Electoral College

National Media Campaign

The executive council developed a national media campaign featuring Bulgarian personalities and informational literature on recent changes to the election law. On May 25, the council launched the campaign at the BTA press agency in Sofia. Approximately 20 journalists from radio, television, print, and web outlets attended the event.

Production of Radio and Television Spots

Twelve celebrity volunteers, including musicians, screen actresses, television personalities, and the presidential IT award winner, were enlisted to participate in the radio and television spots. The council worked with these celebrities to develop the scripts, which are included in this report as Appendix B. The clips were shown on bTV (70 times), MM television (120 times), Bulgarian National Radio (192 times), and Radio Fresh (123 times) from May 25 to June 23.

Media Partners

In addition to the paid-media partners, the council established partnerships with other media outlets to cover or publicize *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* events. These partners included the following:

- Avotra.com – a music information portal
- Vsekiden.com – a news portal
- Radio Alma Mater – the Sofia University student radio
- Glasovoditel.online.bg – an online tool for identifying which party most closely represents one's views
- *Egoist* - a lifestyle magazine popular with young urban professionals
- Local radio stations in Pernik (Extreme) and Stara Zagora (Darik)

National Voter Education Brochure and Other Program Materials

The executive council designed and produced 250,000 voter education brochures (see Appendix C) and posters for universities that explained the new voting procedures in detail, which were distributed by NDI's partner NGOs. In addition, the council produced volunteer t-shirts and cell phone lariat with the *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* logo for NGOs to use in their direct-contact activities.

My Three Reasons to Vote

On June 4 and 19, *Az sam mlad i glasuvam!* volunteers appeared on the television show *Sblusuk* to tell people why they were going to vote. Student volunteer Margarita Peeva's reasons were the following:

1. People often say "the people deserve their leaders." I don't want to blame anyone else for choosing my leaders, I prefer to take this responsibility.
2. I believe that every vote matters. Voting is my right and I have to participate.
3. I care who will make the rules in my country.

"500 volunteers in green t-shirts will encourage the youth from 20 cities to vote. The organizers are 7 NGOs. The 'green t-shirts' will have discussions with politicians and students, they will distribute materials in schools, clubs and Internet cafes..."

24 CHASA, 5/26/2005

Consultations with the CEC

On May 25, representatives of the executive council met with members of the Central Election Commission (CEC) to present the campaign's goals and activities, as well as to ask for permission to conduct non-partisan activities on election day (which unfortunately they could not grant). The following recommendations were also made: break down the election results by gender and age group; require that polling stations be accessible to the disabled; and use Arial font on the ballots as it is the easiest for the visually impaired to read. While the CEC was unable to accept all of the recommendations, it did use the Arial font on the ballot.

Small Grants Administration

NDI conducted a small grants program to fund grassroots GOTV activities throughout Bulgaria. In response to the Institute's announcement of its competitive small grants program, seven NGO networks submitted applications, of which six were funded (the Bulgarian Electoral College's proposal to monitor the elections, rather than conduct GOTV activities, was not funded). Each network received approximately \$4,000 and worked in three to five cities throughout Bulgaria (approximately 20 cities total – see map) to educate and motivate young people to vote. The networks submitted reports on their activities every 10 days and NDI representatives monitored their activities through on-site visits.



NGO Activities

Democracy offers us a chance to vote and express our civic position, and if you do not wish to exercise this right – O.K. but do not deceive yourself that by doing so, you are expressing a civic position. Doing nothing does not change anything. ...[A]nd politicians interpret it as disinterest. Disinterest is not a civic position.

-Opinion from
studentsvote.info

The NGO networks that received small grants conducted activities at the local level to educate people about the changes in the election law and to the ballot and to provide young people with an opportunity to present their ideas to candidates. A complete calendar of activities can be found in Appendix D. Select illustrative activities are detailed below.

Internet

On June 6, the U.N. Association of Bulgaria launched its online forum in which young people shared their thoughts about the elections and party platforms (www.studentsvote.info). The website was publicized by bTV, novinite.com, *Dnevnik*, and other news outlets. By election day, more than 800 people visited the site and approximately 520 individuals posted on the forum.

In addition to the website, NGOs sent e-cards featuring the cover of the voter education brochure to all their contacts. The e-card distribution took place both at the beginning of the campaign and again two days before the elections. More than 5,500 e-cards were sent to voters.

Finally, as part of its website, NDI developed a page (http://www.ndi-bg.org/_bg/azsummladiglas.html) devoted to the coalition's activities: a calendar of events that was updated weekly; an electronic copy of the voter education brochure; and information on the celebrity volunteers. During the month of June—the height of the campaign—the site received approximately eight times as many visitors (5,453) as it had in the previous month (690).

Door-to-Door Outreach, Visits to High Schools, Information Bureaus and Literature Drops

The U.N. Association for Bulgaria conducted door-to-door outreach in students' dorms in Sofia (22 dorms), Burgas (3), and Varna (3). The National Network for Equal Opportunities canvassed in the three dorms surrounding the medical university in Pleven. In total, these activities reached approximately 6,000 voters.



Volunteers explain the new election law to Sofia students

The National Network for Equal Opportunities (NNEO), the “Equality” network, and the U.N. Youth Clubs also worked within high schools to reach out to first-time voters. Between the two organizations, the coalition reached 14 high schools and approximately 3,400 first-time voters in Sofia, Haskovo, and Varna to discuss the importance of voting and procedural details.

“The initiatives of the campaign *I Am Young and I Vote!* are among the most reasonable things which happen around the country in the entire campaign – maybe because they are not organized by the headquarters of one political force and maybe because they give the young people the chance to ask the politicians about the things they care about.”

Newspaper *Kapital*, June 18-24, 2005

All of the NGO networks organized information bureaus in their towns and conducted literature drops in the days before the elections. The NAMRB conducted their information campaign in all 264 Bulgarian municipalities. The networks delivered almost 250,000 brochures prior to election day.



Candidates sign a contract with Silistra's Youth

Candidate Debates

The *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* coalition organized 14 debates that provided young people with an opportunity to directly question candidates on issues. These debates ranged from formal events with highly structured debate rules to more informal events, such as meet-the-candidates discos.

Candidates Debate at the Disco

On June 16 in Silistra, eight candidates met with approximately 40 university students and first-time voters at the local disco to answer their questions on their respective parties' plans for educational reforms, job creation, and options for youth to spend their free time. With the exception of the KB and the New Time, all of the candidates were first on their party list in the region (from the DSB, the NMS, the ADF, the Bulgarian's Peoples Union (BPU), the MRF and the Coalition "Long Live Bulgaria"). The discussion became particularly lively when youth challenged the candidates' intentions to generate increased sports opportunities, as some in the crowd favored other options. The young volunteers from NAMRB took notes on the candidates' answers to the questions that were then turned into a "contract with youth" signed by the candidates at the end of the debate.

Candidates Sit for Exams

More than 70 students from four Sofia universities gathered at the New Bulgarian University on June 17 to "examine" candidates from six of the seven parties represented in parliament. Similar to the students' exams, candidates were given a list of questions in advance, generated by the students, and were told that the debate questions would be selected randomly from the list. The questions that were asked were related to education, reform of the university credit system, and the fight against corruption in the university system. At the end of the debate, the U.N. Association of Bulgaria, which organized the debate, "passed" each of the parties by stamping their platforms with the *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* logo.

Meet-the-Candidate Disco in Sofia

On June 23, the U.N. Youth Clubs organized a meet-the-candidates disco at the Student's House in Central Sofia. Although the major parties were invited, only representatives from the ADF, KB, and NMS attended. Candidates briefly presented how their party would best represent youth in the next parliament and then spent the next hour speaking with students individually to answer their questions on specific issues. Approximately 50 students attended.



Sofia students discuss the issues with ADF candidate Ljubomir Kovachev.

Voter Simulations

On June 14, *Amalipe*, a Roma NGO, organized voter information tables, including a vote simulation, to familiarize people with the new integrated ballot in Veliko Turnovo. Instead of political parties, the ballot listed music genres and in two hours 257 people voted with only two invalid ballots.

On June 22 and 23 in Haskovo, Stara Zagora, and Vratsa, the National Network for Equal Opportunities organized street parades that led to voter information tables and simulation booths where first-time voters could practice the voting process before election day. Approximately 600

young people took advantage of this opportunity. The voter simulations in Haskovo were covered by bTV on its 10 pm national news, as well as in the local newspapers.

Other Activities

GOTV Training for the Minorities Network

On April 21 and 22, NDI trained 26 civic activists from the Minority Initiative for Human Rights (MIHR) to help it conduct GOTV activities for these elections to advocate that political parties include more minorities in the administrative offices of the local and national governments. The training session included the following topics: writing objectives and developing workplans; message development; GOTV tactics and strategic planning; and case studies and problem solving. Participants were especially enthusiastic about the session on case studies and problem solving. All participants received copies of the GOTV manual and a CD of materials from NDI's program on connecting political parties and NGOs.

IV. RESULTS AND ACOMPLISHMENTS

Objective: To provide technical and financial assistance to NGOs to target youth and encourage their participation in the electoral process.

Indicator: Number of voter education/registration activities and candidate debates conducted, inclusive of events that bring candidates and young voters together to discuss specific issues.

- NGOs conducted more than 40 voter education/motivation activities throughout the GOTV campaign (see calendar in Appendix D) such as voter simulations, door-to-door outreach, candidate debates, and information sessions with first-time voters.
- NGOs directly reached approximately 50,000 voters through these activities and an additional 6,000 through the internet.
- NGO events were covered by at least 79 media outlets (television, radio, newspaper and internet sources), including the national outlets Bulgarian National TV, MSAT, bTV, NovaTV, 7 Dni, *Kapital*, *Dnevnik*, *24 Chassa*, *Monitor*, *Sega*, *Novinar*, and vsekiden.com, novinite.com, dir.bg, avotra.com, and home.bg.
- The NGO networks distributed 250,000 voter education brochures in all 264 Bulgarian municipalities before the elections.

Indicator: Number of television and radio spots that target youth and encourage them to vote.

- The *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* television spot was aired 70 times on bTV and 120 times on MM.
- The *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* radio spot was aired 192 times on Bulgarian National Radio and 123 times on Radio Fresh.

- *Az Sam Mlad i Glasuvam!* volunteers appeared on several popular bTV shows, including *The Morning Show*, *Sblusuk*, and *Spoko*.

Indicator: Voter turnout among youth remains consistent or increases as compared to the 1997 and 2001 local elections.

- According to exit polls conducted by MBMD, 57.3 percent of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 29 participated in these elections. This is higher than the national turnout of 55.7 percent.
- Exit polls conducted by Sova Harris also showed that 17.8 percent of voters were aged 18 to 29, which was the same percentage as voters in their 40s and slightly higher than the percentage of voters in their 30s.
- In the nine polling stations that make up Sofia's students' town—the area in which NDI's GOTV partners conducted a massive door-to-door effort—643 percent more students voted in 2005 (4,589) than in 2001 (907).

Unanticipated Results

- *Egoist* magazine included the national educational brochure in its issue released the week before the elections – circulation 6,000.
- The CEC accepted the suggestion of the executive council to use Arial font on the ballots, which is easier for people with vision problems to read.
- Only 1.48 percent of the ballots in this election were invalid. However, as the CEC also conducted an education campaign on the new ballots, it is difficult to discern the effectiveness of each campaign separately.

V. EVALUATION

The June 25 parliamentary elections brought NDI's fourth GOTV program to a successful close. Although voter turnout decreased overall, exit polls indicated that youth were as or more active than other age groups under 50. Those over 50 had the highest voter turnout.

There are several possible reasons for the decreased turnout among the general population, including the following: pre-election polls confidently predicted a BSP/MRF government and would-be voters did not believe their ballot was consequential; the 10 percent of the electorate who intended to vote but had not yet decided whom to support remained undecided on election day; and the change of the election day from Sunday to Saturday and/or the reassignment of some polling stations confused voters, despite government and NGO voter education efforts.

Given the large government GOTV campaign, the budget of which was ten times more than NDI's program, it is hard to determine which campaign influenced youth more. It is important to note that NDI's partners had more than 50,000 direct contacts with youth, while the government relied on television spots, posters, direct-mail campaigns, and voter incentives. Traditionally direct contact with potential voters has a larger impact than a mass media campaign.

NDI also experienced difficulty in tracking the number of students who took advantage of the new law to vote in the city in which they studied. When NDI proposed the program before the new election law was passed, the Institute believed that universities would issue certificates to students verifying their registration status and that it would be able to collect this data from the universities. When the law was finally passed, however, it allowed for students to vote with their student identification card, thus making it difficult for NDI and its partners to collect this data. In addition, the CEC did not differentiate between people added to the registry who were voting with their students' books and those voting with waivers that allowed them to vote outside of their district.

Due to the shorter timeframe for this GOTV campaign compared to previous elections, as well as a smaller amount for small grants, the NGOs conducted activities on a smaller scale than in previous election cycles. Even given the restraints on their resources, the networks exhibited a more sophisticated approach to working with the media than in previous campaigns, resulting in national and local media coverage. One NGO that participated in all three previous GOTV programs commented that the media showed more interest in this year's program than in any of the previous campaigns.

Although many of the NGO networks were recently formed and experienced some internal communication problems, most of the partners within the networks had previous GOTV experience and were eager to share ideas with their less experienced partners. In addition, the NGOs exhibited ingenuity in targeting a subsection of their regular target group (Roma or disabled). Many NGOs commented targeting a specific group was effective and that the campaign provided them with an opportunity to draw younger volunteers to their organization, and with them, their fresh ideas.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- Receive and review final NGO reports on their activities and distribute the final small grants;
- Final meeting of executive council to review the campaign and to collect best practices and lessons learned; and
- Final analysis of program impact.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: NDI Election Update
Appendix B: GOTV Commercial Script
Appendix C: GOTV Brochure
Appendix D: Calendar of NGO Partners Activities



APPENDIX A

BULGARIA PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS June 25, 2005 Election Update

On June 25, 2005 Bulgarian voters cast ballots across the country (and in Bulgarian embassies worldwide) to elect members of the 40th National Assembly. This is Bulgaria's sixth parliamentary election since 1989. Twenty-two political parties competed for 240 seats from 31 electoral districts in a proportional, closed list system. There is a four percent threshold that parties must cross to enter parliament.

Overview of Results

The following table outlines the official results and expected mandates for the 40th National Assembly, compared to mandates at the end of the 39th Assembly.

Party/Coalition	Popular Vote	Mandates in the 40 th	Mandates in the 39 th
Coalition for Bulgaria (KB) – Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) and affiliated smaller parties	31.00%	82	47
National Movement for Simeon II (NMS)	19.88%	53	97
Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF)	12.68%	34	20
Coalition <i>Ataka</i>	8.16%	21	-
Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) – UDF and others	7.70%	20	15
Democrats for Strong Bulgaria (DSB)	6.45%	17	27
Bulgarian National Union (BNU)	5.20%	13	11
Other Parties (under the 4% threshold)	8.59%*	-	23**
	99.66%	240	240

* Votes for parties that failed to cross the threshold will be redistributed to those that did on a proportional basis.

**This number represents independent MPs and members of the New Time party, which did not pass the threshold on June 25.

- The BSP-led Coalition for Bulgaria almost doubled its presence in parliament but did not win enough seats to form a government outright.
- The NMS lost almost half of its seats won in the 2001 parliamentary vote when it received half the popular vote and mandates.
- The MRF increased its seats by almost 50 percent from 2001 and will likely join a governing coalition. Because of a split among center-right parties, MRF emerges as the third strongest party in the country.
- *Ataka*, a new political party, used the last 10 days of the campaign period to raise its support from less than two percent according to public opinion polls to more than eight percent on

election day. These results secured *Ataka*'s place as the fourth strongest power in Bulgarian politics (see below for more analysis on *Ataka*).

- The center-right parties (ADF, DSB, BNU) collectively will lose approximately five seats. Had they run in a coalition they would have emerged as the third strongest party, trailing NMS by one percent.
- The Coalition for Bulgaria placed first in all three of Sofia's election districts, moving the city from the right side of the political spectrum to the left for the first time since 1989. The average of the results for the three districts, by party, is 32 percent (KB), 23 percent (NMS), 17 percent (DSB), 10 percent (ATK), 10 percent (ADF), and 8 percent (BNU).

The 'Ataka' Phenomenon

The big surprise of the elections was the success of Coalition *Ataka* (Attack). Bulgarians first became aware of *Ataka* when it registered in late May. Pre-election polls began to show sizable and increasing support for the party only ten days prior to the elections. *Ataka* received the votes of more than 400,000 citizens, or 8.2 percent of voters.

Support for *Ataka* is drawn from voters wishing to make a protest against the political establishment and attracted to the coalition's populist, indeed radical platform: re-examining approved privatization tenders; unconditionally withdrawing Bulgarian peacekeeping troops from Iraq; keeping the nuclear plant in Kozloduy despite commitments to its closure made in the EU accession treaty; banning land sale to foreigners; and strictly enforcing the prohibition of ethnic and separatists parties and organizations.

The composition of *Ataka*'s candidate lists is concerning. Among the expected 23 new MPs are people who were excluded from other parties and coalitions for inciting ethnic hatred (Ognyan Saparev, formerly of the Coalition for Bulgaria) or collaborating with the secret services (Petar Beron, an original UDF leader). *Ataka*'s leader, Volen Siderov, is included in the 1999 Israeli Foreign Ministry report on Anti-Semitic Incidents Worldwide and in the 2002 Annual Report of Human Rights without Frontiers International.

Voter Turnout

The official turnout according to the Central Election Commission (CEC) was 55.7 percent, approximately 11 and six percent less than the 2001 and 1997 elections, respectively. The low turnout was unexpected, as public opinion research in the week prior to the elections estimated that turnout would be between 60 and 68 percent. There are several possibilities that could have contributed to decreased turnout, including:

- Pre-election polls confidently predicted a BSP/MRF government and would-be voters did not believe their ballot was consequential.
- The 10 percent of the electorate who intended to vote but had not yet decided whom to support remained undecided on election day.
- The change of the election day from Sunday to Saturday and/or the reassignment of some polling stations confused voters, despite government and NGO voter education efforts.

Youth Turnout

Initial analysis of exit polls indicates that, for the first time, people between 18 and 29 went to the polls in numbers similar to older age groups. A more detailed breakdown of youth turnout will be available in the coming weeks following an analysis of the official data and exit polls.

Election Day Conduct

All political parties declared that there were no major violations reported on election day. According to preliminary CEC results, of the more than 3.7 million ballots cast, only 1.48 percent was deemed invalid, dispelling pre-election expectations that many voters would not understand the new integral ballot, which lists all parties on a single ballot rather than on individual color-coded sheets. The OSCE, which conducted an election assessment mission, stated that the elections “demonstrated the credibility of the election process but some administrative and political issues [such as the ambiguity between electoral and governmental authorities in organizing the elections] have created a measure of uncertainty and decreased confidence, and in some instances represented a departure from best electoral practice.”

Registered complaints—none of which constituted organized election fraud—and voter turnout were highest in districts with a mixed ethnic population such as Kardjali (turnout 65 percent) and Razgrad (turnout 68 percent). A significant number of citizens voted in places other than their registered polling stations. Buses were spotted bringing voters to different polling stations to vote. While it is legal for a voter to receive a waiver allowing him/her to vote in a different location, such practices result in a distortion of the vote at a regional level and tip the balance of representation.

In addition to the buses, another controversy arose in Kardjali, a town in southern Bulgaria with a predominantly Turkish population. A sizable number of people with dual citizenship (Bulgarian and Turkish) and who reside in Turkey were allowed to vote with waivers issued by municipal offices on election day. This is a clear violation of the law as municipal offices are supposed to remain closed on election day.

As in previous elections, and despite declarations by most political parties to uphold democratic processes, there were some reports about parties paying voters, particularly the Roma.

What's Next?

The CEC will announce the final results by Tuesday, June 28, as well as the distribution of seats and the names of the elected MPs. This information will allow for a full analysis of Roma and women representation in the 40th National Assembly. Although parties have declared their will to form a government and not to allow any delay in the reform process required for European Union membership, the prospects are uncertain for a stable government—either center-left or center-right.

President Parvanov will summon the 40th National Assembly on July 6. According to the law, the president must extend the first opportunity to form a government to the party with the largest

number of votes, in this case the BSP. The BSP announced on Saturday that it will launch negotiations for a coalition government with the MRF. Since the two parties do not have between them a majority, they may conduct negotiations with individual MPs from the NMS to form a government centered on a platform of European Union membership.

If the BSP's attempt at forming a government within 10 days fails, the chance will be given to the NMS, followed by the MRF. If those three attempts are unsuccessful, a care-taker government will be appointed.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a non-profit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide, has assisted Bulgarian political parties and civic organizations since 1990. With support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) NDI is currently working in Bulgaria in three key areas: enhancing women's political participation, roma political skills building and voter education and GOTV targeting youth voters ahead of 2005 parliamentary elections.

This update was compiled by NDI/Bulgaria staff. For more information, please contact Megan Volk Unangst in Washington at (202) 728-5670 or Sevdalina Voynova in Sofia at (359 2) 980 77 60, or visit www.ndi-bg.org

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APPENDIX B



COMMERCIAL SCRIPT



ANIMATIONSERITE

"We vote because we are Bulgarian and in the next 4 years we intend to live in Bulgaria!"

The band was formed at the beginning of 1997. So far they have released two albums: *A* in 2000 and *+* in 2003. Presently, the boys from *Animatsionerite* are collecting material for a new album, while also working hard on their individual projects.



VESSELA KAZAKOVA:

"I'm tired of waiting! It all depends on us! now!"

Vessela has starred in famous Bulgarian film productions such as *Mila from Mars*, *Stolen Eyes* and *A Crazy Day*. She is currently working on a new film she co-wrote entitled *Stereo (love)*.



DANIEL TSOCHEV:

"It has never occurred to me not to vote!"

Daniel Tsochev has worked in a number of TV productions. He is popular as the voice behind many well-known film characters on the Bulgarian screen. Presently an actor of *Vazrazhdane* Theatre, he also appears on the *Magical Voices* show touring in Europe and North America.



RADOST from *Ogledala* TV show:

"Voting is my way of showing that I am proud of my country."

Apart from being a popular TV host, Radost is also a practicing lawyer and a seven-time national synchronized swimming champion. Radost believes that participating in campaigns such as GOTV is important because it helps ensure a better life for all people in Bulgaria.



RASHI:

“Words don’t count – just get out to vote!”

Rashi is a famous TV host and a graduate of the National Academy of Theatre and Film Art. Rashi has been the host of the *No Comment* TV show since its inception three years ago.



SVETLIN NAKOV:

“I’m voting with my student’s book – you no longer have to travel to vote!”

Svetlin Nakov is 2004 laureate of the John Atanasov Award for contribution to the development of the information society awarded by the Bulgarian President. Svetlin has numerous other awards and publications in the IT field.



SPENS:

“Vote so you don’t blame others next time!”

Spens began his career as a rap singer in 1995. His first album, *Too Personal I*, came out in 2002 and was followed by *I’m Sick of It*. Presently he is co-hosting the Bulgarian Top 100 music chart.



ULYANA:

“This time is the first time!”

The charming co-host of the Bulgarian Top 100 music chart will be voting for the first time in the 2005 parliamentary elections. Along with building a successful career as a TV star, Ulyana is also studying acting and theatre at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Art.

✓ **Аз съм млад и гласувам!**
25 юни 2005



"Аз ще гласувам с моята студентска книжка. Вече не е нужно да пътувате, за да гласувате!"

Светлин Наков
(носителит на наградата на Президента "Джон Атанасов" за 2004 г.)

✓ **Аз съм млад!**

Какво трябва да направя, ако ще гласувам за първи път?

Ако си навършил 18 години и си български гражданин, имаш право да гласуваш. Провери дали името ти е в изборителния списък. Ако не е, трябва лично да се регистрираш да гласуваш в общината.

Постоянният ми адрес не е в населеното място, където уча: как да гласувам?

Ако си ученик или студент, можеш да гласуваш в изборителна секция по твоя избор в населеното място, където учиш.

За да гласуваш, трябва да представиш пред изборителната комисия своята лична карта и студентска/ученическа книжка.

Трябва също така да подпишеш декларация по образец, че не си гласувал и няма да гласуваш на друго място.



✓ **Аз съм млад и гласувам!**
25 юни 2005



Радост от "Огледала";

"Гласуването е моят начин да покажа, че се гордея със страната си!"

✓ **Аз съм млад и гласувам!**
25 юни 2005



Партньори в национална кампания "Аз съм млад и гласувам!"



Национална мрежа за равни възможности

Национална асоциация за човешки права на хората с увреждания "Равнопоставеност"

За повече информации: www.ndi-bg.org

Спонсорено от USAID

✓ **Аз съм млад!**

✓ **Аз съм информиран!**

✓ **Аз гласувам!**

✓ Аз съм информиран!

Как да реша за кого да гласувам?

- Разговаряй със своето семейство и приятели.
- Следи новините, чети вестници и сърфирай в интернет.
- Задавай въпроси на кандидат-депутатите.
- Довери се на инстинктите си.



Весела Казакова:

"Писна ми да чакам!
Всичко зависи
от нас сега!"

Как изглежда бюлетината?

На бюлетината са изброени всички партии/коалиции с квадратче до всяка една, в което да отбележиш избраната от теб.

Всяка партия/коалиция има номер (еднакъв за цялата страна), на бюлетината са изписани името (или абревиатурата) ѝ, както и имената на първите трима кандидати от листата за съответния изборителен район.

✓ Аз съм млад и гласувам!

25 юни 2005

✓ Аз съм млад и гласувам!

25 юни 2005



Раши:

"Няма нужда от думи, просто гласувай!"

✓ Аз гласувам!

Какво трябва да направя в деня на изборите?

В изборителната секция отбелязват името ти в изборителния списък и получаваш бюлетина.

След като отбележиш партията/коалицията, която предпочиташ, събери бюлетината и я подай на член на комисията, за да я подпечата на гърба, преди да я пуснеш в урната.

Подпиши се в изборителния списък. Ако си студент, член на комисията ще подпечата и студентската ти книжка.

Ако се объркаш и все още не си пуснал бюлетината в урната, можеш да поискаш нова бюлетина.



Ани

"Гласуваме, защото сме българци следващите 4 години да живее"

✓ Важни дати

10 юни - последният ден, в който може да бъде вписано в изборителния списък.

25 юни (събота) - ИЗБОРИ. Изборите започват в 06:00 ч. и завършват в 18:00 ч.

Даниел Цочев:

"Никога не ми е хрумвало да не гласувам!"

А за хората с увреждания

Всяка изборителна секция е оборудвана за гласуване на първия етаж. След изборите можеш да се обърнеш към член на изборителна комисия за повече информация за предвидените мерки за хората с увреждания.

✓ Аз съм млад и гласувам!

25 юни 2005

APPENDIX D

Schedule of NGO Partners' Activities

May 26	Press conferences of the National Net for Equal Opportunities <i>Haskovo and Gabrovo</i> Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg
May 27	Press conferences of the National Net for Equal Opportunities Vratza and Stara Zagora Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg
May 27	<i>Press conference of the UN youth clubs in Bulgaria</i> <i>Sofia</i> Contact: Emil Petkov, tel. 0887 894 820; e5kov@yahoo.com
May 30	Debate „Perspectives for the Higher Education After the Parliamentary elections 2005”, invited candidates from the Sofia lists, 10:30 a.m., Studentski Dom <i>Sofia</i> Contact: Mihaela Hristova, tel. 0886 423 458, m_h_hristova@yahoo.com
May 30	Press conference of Amalipe <i>Veliko Turnovo</i> Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg
May 30 – June 3	Informational campaign in all 264 Bulgarian municipalities – distributing the brochure Contact: Maria Kumanova, tel. 0888 383 081; m.kumanova@namrb.bg
May 31	Informational campaign and meeting with young Roma parents and concert <i>Village of Vodoley and Veliko Turnovo</i> Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg
May 31	Meeting with the campaign headquarters of Coalition for Bulgaria, the goal of which is to introduce to them the measures for accessibility for their meetings with disabled voters <i>Sofia</i> Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg
June 1	Young people from Stara Zagora meet Martin Karbovski, candidates, representatives from REC; the purpose of the meeting is to inform and motivate for participation in the coming elections <i>Stara Zagora</i>

Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg

- June 3 – 25** Informational tables and campaign for sending through the post the brochures ‘*InValid, but with Valid Votes*’ and ‘*Accessibility of the polling station and the voting process*’
Burgas, Varna, Vidin and Sofia
Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg
- June 5 – 23** Meetings for young disabled people for introduction of the measures for accessibility and discuss the changes in the election law
Burgas and Vidin
Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg
- June 6** Young people from Pleven meet Martin Karbovski to discuss the coming elections
Pleven
Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg
- June 6** The forum www.studentsvote.info launches
Contact: Emil Petkov, tel. 0887 894 820; e5kov@yahoo.com
- June 6 – 10** Informational campaign in the Roma communities for clarifying the procedure for registration for voting on the current address
Shumen and Haskovo
Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg
- June 8 – 21** Informational campaign I am young and I vote! in schools/ homeroom
Sofia – School 133, School 7; School 32; School 91; School 9; School 127; School 74;
Sofia
Contact: Mihaela Hristova, tel. 0886 423 458, m_h_hristova@yahoo.com
- Varna – School 7
Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg
- Haskovo – Foreign Language School „A. ZLatarov”; Mathematical School; School PGLP; Food Industry School; Financial School; School „Otetz Paisiy”
Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg
- June 8– 24** Door-to-door campaign in the students dormitories
Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, Burgas, Veliko Turnovo, Ruse and Svistov
Contact: Emil Petkov, tel. 0887 894 820; e5kov@yahoo.com
Haskovo and Stara Zagora
Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg
- June 13 – 23** Informational tables and door-to-door campaign in the Roma communities;

distribution of informational materials

Veliko Turnovo, village of Vodoley, Razgrad, Vazovo, Senovo, Sever, Zavet, Seslav, Haskovo, Karlovo, village of Rozino and Montana

Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg

June 13 – 23

Meetings for young disabled people for introduction of the measures for accessibility and discuss the changes in the election law

Burgas

Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg

June 13; 17

Meetings for young disabled people for introduction of the measures for accessibility and discuss the changes in the election law

Vidin

Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg

June 13

Discussion „What does the Youth Expect from Their Candidate?” and Meet the candidates Disco at restaurant Plaza, starting at 8:00 p.m.

Montana

Contact: Maria Kumanova, tel. 0888 383 081; m.kumanova@namrb.bg

June 13

Candidate debate, followed by happening in the Roma community

Shumen

Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg

June 14

Discussion „What does the Youth Expect from Their Candidate?” and Meet the candidates Disco

Silistra

Contact: Maria Kumanova, tel. 0888 383 081; m.kumanova@namrb.bg

June 14

Candidates debate „The Future of Each Bulgarian Citizen is the Future of European Bulgaria”, place – Ritualna Hall in Veliko Turnovo Municipality Building; informational tables and simulations of the voting process in two central parts of the city

Veliko Turnovo

Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg

June 17

Candidate debates „The Parliamentary Presented Parties and the Roma population in the District of Montana”, 5:00 p.m., Mladejki Dom; followed by happening for the young people

Montana

Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg

June 16

Candidate forum “The European Future of Bulgaria and its Youth” in Gabrovo’, 4:00 p.m. in Aleko complex, moderator – the journalist Minka Minkova

Gabrovo

Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg

June 16

Meetings for young disabled people for introduction of the measures for accessibility and discuss the changes in the election law

Sofia

Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg

June 16

Candidates debate for first-time voters, Mladezhki Dom, 11:00 a.m.

Varna

Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg

June 17

Debate “Candidates in Session” with candidates from the Sofia lists of the parliamentary presented political forces

Sofia

Contact: Emil Petkov, tel. 0887 894 820; e5kov@yahoo.com

June 17

Discussion „What does the Youth Expect from Their Candidate?” and Meet the candidates Disco at Top Stars, 8:00 p.m.

Smolyan

Contact: Maria Kumanova, tel. 0888 383 081; m.kumanova@namrb.bg

June 17 – 23

Audits of total of 70 polling stations, aiming to check the accessibility measures and issue of recommendations, where necessary

Burgas, vaena, Vidin and Sofia

Contact: Anna Yanina, tel. 0888 774 718; anna_yanina@abv.bg

June 19

Meet the Candidates Disco in the center of the village

Village of Rozino

Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg

June 19

Meet the Candidates Disco in the central park of the town, 6:00 p.m.

Razgrad

Contact: Teodora Krumova, tel. 0886 003 257; amalipe@mail.bg

June 21

I Vote simulations and happening on the open stage in front of the theater

Stara Zagora

Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg

June 21

Candidate debate with the participation of the young people in the lists of the political forces in Pleven and students from the Medical University in the city, begins at 5:30 p.m., in hall 106 of the Medical University - Pleven

Pleven

Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg

June 22

Street theatre and simulations *Why and How to Vote?* in the organized

informational centers

Haskovo and Vratza

Contact: Katya Bozhikova, tel. 0887 749 660; lik@mbox.digsys.bg

June 23

Students party “Meet the Candidates”, 8:00 p.m., Studentski Dom

Sofia

Contact: Mihaela Hristova, tel. 0886 423 458, m_h_hristova@yahoo.com